

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

My fifth annual cannonball "dive" kicking off the summer season took place at Kenilworth-Parkside Recreation Complex in Northeast on June 26.

On June 18, I was pleased to announce that we're putting an extra \$5.3 million into summer programming. Of this funding, \$5 million will support 8,000 children who will now have productive and educational summer activities. These activities include daylong summer programs provided by the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation that are operated by community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, public schools and charter schools. Children who participate in the activities will receive breakfast and lunch through the Summer Food Service Program, sponsored by the State Education Office. Feeding our Future, funded by the Sodexo Foundation, will provide 45,000 free meals to children in DC at 12 locations.

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation has revamped its summer programs. New camp programs give children experiences in environmental education, theater/fine arts, lacrosse, rowing and sailing. New partners have joined DPR to deliver these summer programs. They include Planet Hope Adventures, Anacostia Watershed Society, Capital Rowing, Winner's Lacrosse and Arena Stage.

Our Department of Parks and Recreation continues its traditional summer offerings — including the annual summer leagues: T-ball, Little League baseball, adult and intergenerational softball, basketball and soccer. Space is still available at all of our camps, and I encourage children to sign up.

We haven't forgotten about our senior citizens. They can take part in the Senior Picnic, the Senior Boat Ride and the weeklong United Intergenerational Caregivers Camp at Camp Riverview, which is a getaway for seniors who serve as primary caregivers for children.

The DC Public Libraries has two important programs, Blast Off to Reading and Holla' Back.

- Blast Off to Reading encourages children to continue reading over the summer break. The programs at our public libraries use musical performances, skits, poetry and stories to show kids how much fun reading can be.
- Holla' Back is a new summer reading program that awards prizes to participants who write book reviews.

At our DC Public Schools, summer school began on June 30 and runs through August 8 for approximately 10,000 students through Grade 12. Some special programs at DCPS include Round Meadow Nature Camp for 500 students in grades 5 and 6; summer band program for 200 students; the Ralph Bunche Summer Scholars Institute for 20 students at Howard University and Algebra Prep for 60 students.

The Department of Employment Services has \$300,000 in extra funds this year to ensure that we meet our goal of providing at least 5,000 summer jobs for young people through its "Passport to Work Youth Employment Services" programs. Passport to Work has three components – temporary summer employment opportunities; in-school employability training and out-of-school subsidized employment and vocational training for young people who are no longer enrolled in school. We are still looking for employers who can place young people in jobs for the summer so that we can exceed our goal.

In other summer news, the Metropolitan Police Department sponsors "40 Days of Increased Peace," a summer-long series of events involving police, clergy and community designed to provide alternatives to violence for young people.

For more information about summer programs, please call (202) 727-1000 or visit the 2003 Summer Youth Programs website at www.summeryouthprogram.dc.gov.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

11th Annual National Capital Barbecue and Rib Cutting Ceremony

The National Capital Barbecue Battle is a Washington tradition bringing together Washington area families in the spirit of community, cooperation and celebration. Thousands of families came out to celebrate on June 21 and 22 and enjoy great music, lots of activities for kids, cooking demonstrations, and a huge collection of interactive exhibits and displays.

By participating, we helped raise much-needed funds for the Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs. In past years, the event has generated over \$450,000 for the clubs and other charitable organizations. Barbecue competitors from around the country and the DC metropolitan area fired up their barbecue grills and smokers and battled it out all weekend on Pennsylvania Avenue in the shadow of the Capitol building. More than 30 teams, including some of the biggest winners on the national barbecue circuit, locked tongs and went after the title of National Barbecue Champion, as well as more than \$15,000 in cash and prizes, huge trophies, and the chance to participate in the cook-off at the World Championship in Memphis, Tennessee. Those judging the barbecue were mostly "certified" barbecue judges with classroom hours and on-the-job training at contests around the country, as well as a lot of barbecue under their belts.

I want to thank everyone who came out – not only to compete, but to help a great cause.



Mayor Williams participates in 11th annual National Capital Barbecue and rib cutting ceremony

Community Profile

Jason Willis

Jason Willis, a recent graduate of Catholic University, has been a leader on his campus and in the nation working not only as an active volunteer, but also addressing the structural needs of volunteers to provide quality service. He has been committed to service his entire life — he received the President's Student Service Award in high school and led alternative spring break Habitat for Humanity trips when he was in college.

"Volunteering gives people an opportunity to see the other side of America — the side that doesn't have the luxuries we do, nor the ability to spend their money as they please," Jason said.



Jason Willis

Jason creates solutions to community needs. He is responsible for a donation of thousands of books from his former high school in Delaware to DC Public Schools. He helped conceptualize and develop the CoRAL Community Research And Learning) Network which supports community-based research by matching community organizations with research needs. For more information, visit www.coralnetwork.org.

Jason has been awarded a mini-grant from the CoRAL Network as the project director of REFLEX to develop a reflection and training program for the DC Reads program, which will be linked to Catholic University's service-learning program. Many college students see tutoring as a way to give back to the District, but few have the training to provide quality tutoring to children. Jason has helped train more than 300 tutors volunteering in local elementary schools, impacting the quality of tutoring for hundreds of children. Jason has been president of Catholic University's chapter of Habitat for Humanity and is currently an intern at the Corporation for National and Community Service. As a member of the Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity, he served as the Service and Communication Committee Chair and the National Service Week Chair, supporting thousands of hours of service to his community. He was the recipient of the Mary Elinor Smith Community Service Award.

Jason is the June youth winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by the DC Commission on National and Community Service. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit www.cnscs.dc.gov for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.



Parkview Recreation Center Grand Opening and Girard Street Playground Groundbreaking

On June 20, I joined a host of residents to celebrate two exciting parks and recreation developments in Ward 1.

First, I joined a celebration for the grand opening of the Parkview Recreation Center on Warder Street and Otis Place in Northwest. This beautifully renovated \$1.2 million facility will enable the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to offer enhanced recreation opportunities for young children and a resource for parents and guardians of this community. The existing 4,500-square-foot, one-story masonry building was renovated and supplemented with a 1,200-square-foot addition. The center also now includes a new play area, ball field improvements, lighting and fencing, new basketball courts, a tot lot, staff parking, and picnic areas.

Second, I joined a celebration for the groundbreaking at the Girard Street Playground, located in the 1400 block of Girard Street and University Place in Northwest. Several tragic homicides in the neighborhood three years ago prompted the DPR to develop the area as a park and playground.

Working with many community groups, DPR applied for and was awarded in July 2000 a \$281,000 Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) grant from the National Park Service. Following the grant approval, DPR and the firm "istudio" engaged the community in a series of design meetings to get a sense of what kind of park was desired. Several hundred children and adults participated in these design sessions, and a consensus concept plan was achieved.

Both Parkview and Girard Street are great examples of our commitment to support the youth of the District of Columbia and help them reach their full potential. As I often tell our citizens, government can't do it alone — and together we can accomplish so much more. All around our city, our residents are coming together to open new recreation centers. We're making sure our young people and all of our citizens have places to share with each other. I believe the strength and the hope of our young people depends on citizens — individual and corporate — coming together around a vision. Together, we can build on this community spirit, neighborhood by neighborhood.

As always, my administration is committed to our parks and playgrounds and is encouraging innovative approaches to maintaining our facilities.

District Bond Rating Improved

June 23 was a great day for our city and a testament to the hard work of our city's finance officials in keeping our financial house in order. On that day, I joined Chief Financial Officer Natwar M. Gandhi to announce that Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's have upgraded the District's General Obligation Bonds to A- from BBB+.

This is a crowning achievement for the District government. Even at a time when the nation as a whole is facing economic hardships, and other jurisdictions are being downgraded or put on negative outlook, we have gained the confidence of Wall Street analysts. And we did it the old fashioned way — we earned it. The difference here in the District of Columbia is that (together with the Council) we are not amassing deficits. We are avoiding them. We are living within the limitations of our budget. We are behaving responsibly.

Fitch Ratings upgraded the rating on \$2.7 billion in outstanding general obligation bonds to A- from BBB+, among other positive actions. This is on the heels of a recent announcement from Moody's that the District of Columbia's financial outlook is positive.

This is our recognition for six consecutive balanced budgets and clean Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs). It is the result of a mutual commitment from this Mayor, from the DC Council and from Dr. Gandhi that we will not lapse into the past practices of deficit spending and reckless fiscal mismanagement that once brought this city to its knees.

The upgrade demonstrates that our elected leadership has a firm grip on the city's finances. Together, we are committed to avoiding the horrid days of junk bonds or the need for a financial control board to oversee our city's finances. According to Fitch Ratings, the upgrade on the general obligation bonds to 'A-' is based on a "consistent trend of increased financial reserves, stringent budget monitoring and controls in the two fiscal years following elimination of the control board, growth in taxable assessed values, and less disruption in economic activity and economically sensitive tax revenues than was predicted in the period immediately following September 11."

From a Wall Street rating agency, this is high praise indeed!



Mayor Williams joins Parks and Recreation Director Neil Albert and Councilmember Jim Graham for groundbreaking

Columbia Heights Village Renovations Completed

On June 20, I was pleased to join an important celebration for the renovation of a large apartment complex in Columbia Heights — Columbia Heights Village. This \$62 million rehabilitation effort preserves affordable housing and maintains Section 8 units.

The DC Housing Finance Agency (HFA), Clark Realty Capital, CHV Tenants Association and Change All Souls Development Corp. collaborated to rehabilitate the 406-unit apartment complex, which includes seven townhouses, a 10-story high-rise apartment building, and 23 garden-style apartment buildings in Columbia Heights. The renovations are part of the DC Housing Finance Agency's \$62 million effort to preserve over 750 Section 8 housing units along 14th Street in Northwest.

I was very pleased to celebrate the preservation of 406 more affordable apartments in a neighborhood that's come a long way in the past several years. Housing is a priority in my administration, and Columbia Heights has been a neighborhood we've targeted to ensure we preserve the rich culture it's maintained over the years.

I've worked hard to ensure that as the neighborhood welcomes the fruits of revitalization — like the new Metro station and the new retail coming to the Tivoli Theater — committed residents in the area aren't displaced and can enjoy the new additions to their neighborhood.

Columbia Heights Village shows that tenants don't just have to sit back and watch the redevelopment of their neighborhood. They can take part in the process and weigh in on the decisions. Partnerships like this one among the city government, private sector developers and residents are exactly what we encourage. When everyone has a place at the table, we all win.

With the assistance of \$30 million in tax-exempt bond financing from the DC HFA, this partnership ensures that all 406 renovated units remain in the Section 8 program for at least the next 20 years.

As we work to bring 100,000 new residents to our city, our citizens can rest assured that my administration is committed to preventing the displacement of low-income residents.

As many of you know, we are having what I call a "move-in sale" — part of my effort to bring in 100,000 new residents to our city. On June 11, we launched a new campaign called "city living, dc style!," designed to help inform and inspire people to move to our city. Part of it focuses on spreading the word about affordable housing in the District. To learn more, visit www.citylivingdc.com.

For too long, affordable housing has fallen by the wayside in the District of Columbia. In 1997 and 1998, for example, there were virtually no housing permits issued in this city. That's unacceptable, and I'm pleased to say we're making tremendous progress on many fronts.

DC Performance Management Program Praised

The District's Performance Management Program (PMP) was highlighted in the May 2003 issue of the International Public Manager's Association for Human Resources newsletter. The article commends the District Office of Personnel's PMP, which has helped this Administration to follow through on my promise to increase the accountability and overall performance of our government's managers. If you would like to receive a copy of the article, please contact Heather Mayes, in the DC Office of Personnel, at (202) 727-1743 or by email at heather.mayes@dc.gov.



District Activities



Mayor Williams describes the resurgence of U Street, NW to B. Smith, host of B. Smith with Style, a nationally syndicated television show, and owner of B. Smith restaurants at Union Station and in New York.



On June 25, Mayor Williams joined kids at the Department of Parks and Recreation headquarters in Northwest to celebrate the launch of food service company Sodexo's "Feeding Our Future" summer lunch program in the District.



Mayor Williams holds on tight as he performs his fifth annual cannonball "dive" at Kenilworth-Parkside Recreation Complex in Northeast on June 26.



Mayor Williams, Councilmember Jim Graham, the DC Housing Finance Agency and local developers celebrate the acquisition and renovation of Columbia Heights Village at 14th Street and Columbia Road, NW.

Community News

- [Mayor Vetoes Bill that Would Have Ended Master Business License Program](#)
- [Mayor Testifies on School Choice](#)
- [Mayor's Statement on the Death of Maynard Jackson](#)

[View all News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

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| 7/04 | Independence Day Parade
Noon
Constitution Avenue, NW between 7th and 17th Streets, NW

37th Annual Palisades Parade and Picnic
11 am
Parade begins at Whitehaven Parkway and MacArthur Boulevard.
Picnic following parade at Palisades Recreation Center at Dana Street and Sherrier Place, NW |
| 7/15 to 7/19 | Second Annual DC Hip Hop Theatre Festival
Call (202) 724-5613 for times and venues or visit www.dcart.sdc.gov |
| 7/16 | Intergenerational Grandparents Banquet
1:30 pm
Fort Stevens Senior Center
1327 Van Buren Street, NW
For more information, contact Senior Services at (202) 282-0753 |

[View the Mayor's daily schedule](#)

